

I would like to express the hope that you will consider seriously whether initiative by you at this time might not result in the re-institution of these agreements to ease the situation on the border.

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*The Chargé in Israel (Russell) to the Department of State*¹

SECRET PRIORITY

TEL AVIV, May 22, 1953—6 p. m.

1782. At meeting yesterday at his request Foreign Minister Sharet informed me of attack few nights ago on car traveling Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road. Gave following details: Approximately 1:30 a.m. night of May 19-20 car traveling from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv containing no passengers caught in automatic fire between Shaar Hago: (Bab el Wad) and Shariff. Car hit about 20 times and driver wounded. No empty cartridges yet found. Foreign Minister said military censorship invoked to keep out of press item "which would have tended create atmosphere of panic". (US protest has been lodged with MAC.)

Foreign Minister also reviewed other border incidents during month of May.

Firing at that traffic along road, he asserted, was serious matter that meant road no longer safe at night and communications with Jerusalem endangered. He recalled that similar situation had been faced between 1936 and 1938 and more seriously between 1947 and 1948 ("that is why we fought"). If this kind of incident continues, he asserted, Israel will have to consider itself "in state of war" and will have to take appropriate action to defend itself. "May have to occupy one or two spots to control places adjoining roads so that flanks of road are under effective protection", he explained. Added that he making these observations with full realization of seriousness of what he was saying and of incidents. Concluded that while Israel not anxious precipitate problem, continuation such incidents would make position "untenable".

Pointing out that above situation one of the complex of many problems in the Middle East to which Secretary Dulles presently giving his attention, I expressed hope Israel would exercise restraint in order give Secretary and Department opportunity to study these problems on basis Secretary's conversation with leaders

¹ Repeated to Amman, London, Paris, and Jerusalem.